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A new spin on world literature

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Related web site: <http://www.students.surrey.sfu.ca/worldliterature>

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Simon Fraser University is introducing a unique program in world literature at its Surrey campus in September 2007. Offered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the undergraduate program will focus on novels, poetry and essays from around the world, says Paulo Horta, who was instrumental in shaping the new program.

"We'd like to tap into the extraordinary cosmopolitan and multicultural richness and potential of the Lower Mainland in general, and Surrey in particular." The world literature courses begin in second year, with priority registration available for students in the first year of the Explorations in the Arts and Social Sciences program. The program should appeal to "anyone who is interested in books, language, travel, or who wants to compete in our increasingly globalized marketplace," Horta says. Teachers would also find it helpful for preparing for the multicultural classroom, he says. The world literature courses will be taught in English, and students will have opportunities to study other languages through elective courses, field schools and international exchanges. Horta says the program will allow students to compare multiple traditions and literatures in the same class, thus allowing a cross-cultural reading of texts. Existing world literature courses typically focus on only one culture and its literature at a time.

He says it's fitting the program is offered at the Surrey campus because the city is one of the most dynamic and diverse in Canada. "It is an ideal venue for such cross-cultural learning and exchange."